

EPA Region 10 prepared these frequently asked questions to assist potential applicants for Brownfield grants. These were questions raised during regional grant application training sessions and are supplemental questions to the FAQ document that can be found on the main EPA Brownfield webpage. Please review the 2005 Grant Application Guidelines published in September 2004 when preparing your application. If there is a conflict between the answer to a question and the statute, regulation, or the guidelines - then the statute, regulation, or the guidelines take precedence.

REGION 10 GRANTS OUTREACH QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSIONS
September 29 & October 7, 2004

Q: Are letters of support required or allowed to be submitted?

A: You may attach letters of support. You should identify supporting community groups, organizations or other parties in response to the Community Involvement ranking criterion, and if you have collected letters of support, you could list the organizations who have provided letters in the same section.

Q: We have a current cleanup grant that is not yet finished, how would it be viewed requesting another grant?

A: Entities who have previously received brownfields funding must also respond to the ranking criteria that address accomplishments and grants management on existing or past brownfield funded projects. Generally, if the projects are moving along as scheduled or reasonable explanations are provided for the status of the projects, the application can fair well on that criteria. The overall application score would depend on responses to all the criteria combined.

Q: Can we apply for funding to conduct monitoring for long term effects and would this be an eligible activity?

A: The law allows a limited amount of assessment, cleanup, and RLF grant funds to be used for monitoring and enforcement of any institutional control used to prevent human exposure to any hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant from a brownfield property.

Q: There is a need to do cleanup planning and assessment, but we are not sure if we are ready to apply for cleanup funding? Can we apply for both in same year?

A: In order to apply for a cleanup grant you must have a completed Phase 1 environmental assessment by the time you submit the application. It is possible to submit an application for assessment and cleanup in the same year for the same property, but the need for both types of funding must be clear in order to be more competitive.

Q: Does the applicant have to own the property?

A: If submitting a proposal for cleanup funding, the applicant has to own the property or have it in ownership by the date of award and no later than September 30, 2005. Assessment grant applicants do not have to own the property.

Q: What about non-profit organizations, what are they eligible for?

A: Non-profits, as defined in the guidance, are eligible to apply for cleanup grants.

Q: How broad should we describe the community and the impacts of brownfields?

A: You would want to describe the community so that includes the people affected by the proposed grant activities. The community should also reflect the people that will benefit from the actions or ultimate revitalization. Your proposal may provide information that reflects the whole jurisdiction for a community-wide and then be narrowed to a particular neighborhood for the targeted grant activities.

Q: Do we describe leveraging all the way through cleanup and redevelopment phases even if we are at assessment?

A: Yes, to the best extent you can, provide any plans or ideas on how you would fund the project start to finish.

Q: How is leveraging different from match?

A: A match is what is required for a cleanup or RLF grant, unless a waiver is granted. The match can be from applicant or funds from other partners. To extent that other resources are used to bring a project to conclusion, this can be through leveraging.

Q: Our project is focused on non-economic benefits and will not result in a new business or new jobs. Can our proposal still be competitive?

A: Yes, grants are awarded to projects that demonstrate a variety of beneficial reuses. Beneficial reuse can include a focus on improving human health and the environment or ecological and habitat enhancements, for example. The focus isn't just job creation. Explain the benefits of your project and make the case for how that meets the needs.

Q: If we have ongoing outreach efforts related to the site targeted in the grant proposal, can we use those efforts to meet the grant requirements and describe them in our grant application?

A: There are two main areas in the grant guidance that focus on outreach including the Community Notification requirement as is described in the Threshold Section sections and the Community Involvement Ranking Criteria. The Community Notification criteria should be reviewed to see if your current efforts meet the requirement which are very specific to the proposal you are submitting this year. If not, you must take actions to meet the requirement for your proposal to compete in the national review process. For the ranking criteria Community Involvement, you can use existing networks and outreach strategies to help accomplish that requirement, but please read the description carefully to ensure that it meets the criteria fully. In regards to implementation of the grant activities, use of existing outreach efforts is valued to the extent it really reaches the targeted community and specifically impacts the areas surrounding the proposed project.

Q: We don't have anyone involved from the public health department. Is it okay to just respond that the public health department has not been involved (As is requested under the "Reduction of Threats to Human Health and the Environment" criteria)?

A: Proposals that include some coordination at a minimum with the Public Health Department are generally rated more favorably for this criteria than those who respond with no involvement by the Health Department.

Q: If a certain cleanup level is required by the state environmental department, but the community vision is for a property that meets a higher more protective standard would this still qualify as cleanup grant?

A: Achieving a higher cleanup standard is something that is eligible, although the proposal will be evaluated based on the overall project. In addition to the community vision, what are other factors that may affect the sustainability of the environment, the community, and the targeted property. For instance, will the zoning match the vision which would require clean up to a higher standard or would it be possible to meet the community's vision and still have the property used and zoned for less protective uses?

Q: We own properties and want to do asbestos assessment of existing buildings. Is this an eligible activity?

A: Depending on whether the specific owner/applicant would be considered an eligible entity, asbestos is a hazardous substance that can be addressed with brownfields funding. Although, the proposal would need to demonstrate a threat to human health and the environment to be more competitive.